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Security Council

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Resolution 1537 (2004)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 4938th meeting, on 30 March 2004

The Security Council,

Recalling its previous resolutions and the statements of its President concerning the situation in Sierra Leone,

Affirming the commitment of all States to respect the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Sierra Leone,

Commending the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States towards building peace in the subregion, and encouraging the Presidents of the Mano River Union member States to resume dialogue and to renew their commitment to building regional peace and security,

Expressing its appreciation to those Member States providing troops, civilian police personnel and support elements to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL),

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 19 March 2004 (S/2004/228),

Welcoming the significant progress made towards the benchmarks for drawdown of UNAMSIL, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1436 (2002) and 1492 (2003), and commending UNAMSIL for the progress made to date in the adjustments to its size, composition and deployment,

Noting, however, that progress towards the benchmarks remains fragile, and some major gaps still remain, in particular with regard to the capacity of the Sierra Leone Police and armed forces to maintain security and stability effectively,

Reiterating the importance of the effective consolidation of stability and State authority throughout Sierra Leone, particularly in the sensitive diamond-producing areas and in the border areas, and stressing continued United Nations support to the Government of Sierra Leone in fulfilling these objectives,

Emphasizing the importance of free, fair and transparent local elections in May 2004 and encouraging the Government of Sierra Leone to make the necessary preparations, assisted by UNAMSIL within its mandate,

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Encouraging the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to produce its report as soon as possible and welcoming the intention of the Government of Sierra Leone to establish a Human Rights Commission thereafter,

Noting the Secretary-General's analysis of the need for a significantly-reduced United Nations peacekeeping presence to remain in Sierra Leone into 2005,

Emphasizing the importance of the Government of Sierra Leone's assuming full responsibility for national security as soon as possible,

1. *Decides* that the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) shall be extended for a period of six months until 30 September 2004;

2. *Welcomes* the Secretary-General's intention to adjust the timetable for UNAMSIL's drawdown during 2004, in order to ensure a more gradual reduction in its military strength, as outlined in paragraph 72 of his report;

3. *Urges* the Government of Sierra Leone to intensify its efforts to develop an effective and sustainable police force, army, penal system and independent judiciary, so that the Government can rapidly take over from UNAMSIL full responsibility for maintaining law and order throughout Sierra Leone, and encourages donors and UNAMSIL, in accordance with its mandate, to continue to assist the Government in this regard;

4. *Urges* the Government of Sierra Leone to continue to strengthen its control over, and regulation of, diamond mining, including through the High Level Steering Committee;

5. *Decides* that a residual UNAMSIL presence will remain in Sierra Leone, for an initial period of six months from 1 January 2005, reduced from the December 2004 level of 5,000 troops by 28 February 2005 to a new ceiling of 3,250 troops, 141 military observers and 80 United Nations civilian police personnel, and requests the Secretary-General to proceed with planning on the basis of the recommendations in his report, in order to ensure a seamless transition from the current configuration of UNAMSIL to the residual presence;

6. *Affirms* its intention to confirm the precise tasks of the residual UNAMSIL presence, and the benchmarks for its duration, no later than 30 September 2004;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide by 15 September 2004 a progress report, including progress made in the work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, progress in resolving the conflict in Liberia, further increases in the capability of the Sierra Leone Police and armed forces and strengthened cooperation among United Nations missions in the subregion, with recommendations for any modifications such progress might allow to the size, composition, duration and benchmarks of the residual UNAMSIL presence;

8. *Welcomes* the Secretary-General's intention to keep the security, political, humanitarian and human rights situation in Sierra Leone under close review and to report to the Council, after due consultations with troop-contributing countries and the Government of Sierra Leone, including by quarterly assessments of progress against the benchmarks for UNAMSIL's drawdown, including the capacity of the Sierra Leone security sector;

9. *Expresses its appreciation* for the essential work being carried out by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, notes with serious concern the precarious financial situation of the Court for its third year of operation, urges all countries to submit their outstanding pledged funds immediately, supports the Secretary-General's request to the General Assembly to consider a contribution to the financing of the Court from the regular budget, as in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly of 14 March 2004 (A/58/733), and urges all States to cooperate fully with the Court;

10. *Commends* the Secretary-General's efforts to establish cooperation between the United Nations missions in the subregion and welcomes his intention in paragraph 65 of his report to submit recommendations to the Council by the end of 2004 on how such cooperation might be strengthened;

11. *Requests* UNAMSIL to share its experience with the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and to carry out its mandate in close liaison with them, especially in the prevention of movements of arms and combatants across borders and in the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes;

12. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.